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Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

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MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT HEALTH CARE LEGISLATION IMPROVES ACCESS TO SERVICES AND BETTER PROTECTS PUBLIC SAFETY

Latest Bill Marks Milestone in Government's Efforts to Deliver Results in Health Care for Ontarians

TORONTO – The Health System Improvements Act, 2007, is the tenth piece of legislation passed by Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman in one of the most productive terms in the health portfolio in the past thirty years.

"We are moving forward to modernize our health system to provide greater access to services and better protect public safety," Smitherman said. "All ten pieces of legislation, including this Act, will help to make our health care system more responsive to the needs of Ontarians."

On Thursday, the government passed the Health System Improvements Act, 2007. Highlights of the new law include:

- Increasing transparency of health regulatory colleges by requiring them to post information on their websites such as:
    - findings of malpractice and professional negligence against regulated health care professionals;
    - findings of professional misconduct related to offences committed by regulated health care professionals where they were found guilty (e.g., criminal offences); and
    - enhanced summaries of discipline decisions about regulated health care professionals.
- Establishing the first-ever Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion a centre for public health excellence that will provide research, scientific and technical advice and support.
- Enhancing services that optometrists provide, improving access to dental hygienists, and establishing new colleges to regulate four additional health professions – naturopathy, homeopathy, kinesiology and psychotherapy.
- The Chase McEachern Act (Heart Defibrillator Civil Liability), 2007 which will provide liability protection to individuals, who attempt to use an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) in an emergency, and to owners and occupiers of premises with AEDs. Chase McEachern was a young boy who died of a heart condition who had wanted to promote the installation and use of defibrillators to save lives.

"Our son Chase had a dream of seeing more defibrillators available in more public places to save more lives," said John McEachern, Chase's father. "My wife Dorothy, our son Cole, my family and I, are honoured to see the Chase McEachern Act become law, keeping the dream our late son had for public defibrillators, very much alive.

During Minister Smitherman's term as Minister of Health and Long-Term Care the following legislation has been passed:

- Personal Health Information Protection Act;
- Commitment to the Future of Medicare Act;
- Transitional Physician Payment Review Act;
- Health Protection and Promotion Amendment Act;
- Tobacco Control Statute Law Amendment Act;
- Local Health System Integration Act;
- Transparent Drug System for Patients Act;
- Traditional Chinese Medicine Act;
- Long Term Care Homes Act;
- Health System Improvements Act.

Today's initiative is part of the McGuinty government's plan for innovation in public health care, building a system that delivers on three priorities – keeping Ontarians healthy, reducing wait times and providing better access to doctors and nurses.

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